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Federal Communications Commission
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**IN THE MATTER OF: NOMINATION FOR UNIVERSAL SERVICE
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPANY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CC DOCKET NOS. 97-21 AND 96-45**

Dear USAC Committee:

I support the nomination of Karen Buller to continue her position as a Director of the Board of the Universal Service Administrative Company. She presently represents the low-income consumers. Karen's efforts on telecommunications issues are invaluable to Indian Country. Her work as the founder, President and CEO of the National Indian Telecommunications Institute (NITI) in Santa Fe, New Mexico keeps her in constant contact with tribes and their needs for technology. NITI works at a grassroots level to offer tribal people the knowledge and expertise to use technology and telecommunications advances in the development of their economies and protection of their tribal sovereignty. Karen knows what's really happening in Indian Country on every level and can be nothing but an asset to your committee and its dedication to having the voice of low-income people represented.

Her work as a policy analyst and Native advocate to governmental agencies has given Native people and other minorities a voice in an arena that typically generalizes the needs of all minorities. The needs of tribal people and other low-income citizens are unique depending on location, status and race. Karen realizes that each of those needs has to be considered to truly make and impact.

The Native American Rights Fund (NARF) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that provides legal representation and technical assistance to Indian tribes, organizations and individuals nationwide - a constituency that often lacks access to the justice system. Our organization understands that the needs of Native people are unique tribally and to protect a tribe is to consider those needs. NARF focuses on applying existing laws and treaties to guarantee that national and state governments live up to their legal obligations. With credibility built over thirty-two years, NARF has become a respected consultant to policy makers and others engaged

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in drafting legislation. As a consensus builder, NARF works with religious, civil rights, and other Native American organizations to shape the laws that will help assure the civil and religious rights of all Native Americans. This emphasis helps tribes in all fifty states to develop strong self-governance, sound economic development, prudent natural resources management and positive social development.

With more Indians gaining access to governmental agencies and initiatives, we believe the needs of Indian people are finally being heard. But the process is just beginning and we need people like Karen Buller to continue the process. I fully support the nomination of Karen Buller to the USAC committee.

Sincerely,


Wallace Coffey,

Chair, Native American Rights Fund Board of Directors

Karen Radney Buller

Karen Radney Buller is a member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma. She is the President and CEO of the National Indian Telecommunications Institute (NITI), a non-profit organization dedicated to employing advanced technology to serve American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians in the areas of education, economic development, language and cultural preservation, tribal policy issues and self-determination. Ms. Buller is an advocate for education, telecommunications, and Indian issues.

She began her teaching career at Haskell College (now Haskell Indian Nations University). In 1982 Haskell students voted Buller Haskell's outstanding faculty award for her teaching excellence and commitment to Indian students. She has served on many parent and teacher boards in her current home city Santa Fe, NM and is well known by New Mexico legislators for her work towards education reform for New Mexico schools.

Buller is a recognized telecommunications expert in Indian Country. She has testified before both houses of the U.S. Congress and the FCC on the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and Universal Service and its impact on Indian communities. Buller is currently serving as a member of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors. Buller was nominated by US Senator Pete V. Domenici and appointed by FCC Chairman Michael Powell. USAC governs the E-rate, Lifeline & Link-up and Rural Health programs.

Buller, "an early adopter" of the Internet, saw the potential of using the Internet to improve education for all students, but especially for Indian children. Her work at NITI ties together her passions for advancing Indian communities using the power of telecommunications to its fullest potential, and improving education for all children.

NITI's on-going projects continue Buller's efforts to support Indians through the use of advanced technology. Some of these projects are:

- A partnership with the Navajo Education Technology Consortium on a five-year project to provide web-based cultural curriculum training to school districts with high Navajo enrollment in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. This project is funded by a 1998 U.S. Department of Education Technology Education Challenge Grant and a Star Schools Grant.
- NITI is creating an interactive CD of the Comanche Dictionary for the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma. This innovative CD will serve as a model for other tribes also wishing to use technology for language preservation.
- NITI's Virtual Museum Project designed and built a virtual web museum for the New Mexico State Museum of Indian Arts and Culture based on their *Here, Now, and Always* exhibit (<http://www.herenowalways.org>) which was curated by Native Americans. NITI also trained members of New Mexico's 22 tribes to make virtual museums using the *Here, Now and Always* model. This project was supported by the US Department of Commerce's Technology Innovation and Infrastructure Assistance (TIIAP) Program, The Rockefeller Foundation and Native American Systems, Inc.

- NITI hosted *Digital Council Fires: A Native American Telecommunications Conference*, in 1999 in Albuquerque, NM. The conference provided a forum for tribal people to discuss telecommunications access and content issues in Indian Country. Support for the conference was provided by the Ford Foundation.
- NITI's Legal Education & Assistance Program for Indian Telecommunications (LEAF IT) provides legal advice and consultation to Indians nationwide on a variety of telecommunications issues. This program is funded by the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation and the Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation.
- NITI's publication *Making Technology Our Own , Toward Affordable Connectivity in Indian Country* assists Tribes to make informed decisions about telecommunications issues. This publication was the result of a 2-year project supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation.